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SUBJECT: NEW DELHI 2005 POLITICAL REPORTING OFFICERS' CONFERENCE

1. (U) As previewed in recent e-mails to addressee posts, Embassy New Delhi is pleased to host the second annual Political Reporting Officers' Conference, September 29, 2005 in New Delhi. The event, for which we hope to attract participation from both India constituent posts and India's neighbors, is intended to take a serious look at our reporting and outreach priorities, and at the same time provide an occasion for strengthening communication networks among those working on South Asian issues.

2. (U) The conference will begin with a morning session for Americans and FSNS focused on Indian domestic politics and the challenges we face in doing our jobs and will include a lunchtime keynote speaker. The afternoon session will be an Americans-only focused discussion on foreign policy and India's regional relationships (for which we hope to have speakers from a number of other missions in the area). The formal program will conclude with a front office session focused on management priorities. Following the conference, there will be a Political Counselor-hosted reception that will include Delhi luminaries drawn from the strategic community.

3. (U) The administrative coordinator for the event is POL OMS Myrta Browne. Those interested in participating in the conference should confirm their attendance as soon as possible. She can be reached via e-mail ([brownem@state.gov](mailto:brownem@state.gov)) or on 91-11-2419-8710. POLOFF Adam Stone is the point of contact for any suggestions relating to program content. He can be reached via e-mail ([stoneac@state.gov](mailto:stoneac@state.gov)) or at 91-11-2419-8119.

4. (U) There will be no conference fee beyond the cost of lunch. For those coming from outside Delhi who may wish to keep travel costs down, options will be available for accommodations within the Embassy community. Each officer coming from outside India will be assigned a control officer who will put together a program of meetings before or after the conference with relevant Delhi-based interlocutors. Please note Embassy New Delhi cannot fund participants' travel.

5. (SBU) Following is an initial list of themes we expect to discuss. A final program, including issues for discussion, will be sent to all participants prior to the conference via e-mail.

--What are the implications of improved Indo-U.S. relations for the region?

--What are the implications of the improved Indo-U.S. relationship on Indo-China relations?

--What are India's expectations from the U.S. toward terrorism and unrest emanating from Pakistan, Kashmir, Nepal, Sri Lanka, and Bangladesh?

--What are India's priorities in Central Asia?

--What more can we do with India to advance our common interests in the Gulf?

--What is the effect of Indo-Pak obsession on the region? Are we ignoring other South Asian challenges? Does India, its bureaucracy, and its military put itself at risk by obsessing about Pakistan to the detriment of its policies towards Nepal, Bangladesh, and China?

--Is India's prosperity assured or could there be setbacks in the coming years?

--What is the impact of India's frustrated quest for a UN Security Council seat on its foreign policy? How will it respond to setbacks to marshal support for a new effort, or what will it do to bolster its world stage presence to justify its seat?

--SAARC: What are India's priorities at the November 2005 conference? What is the outlook for SAFTA implementation January 2006? Is SAARC effective and will it improve India's relations on a bilateral level?

--Energy: What are India's priorities and chances for regional cooperation? Will countries be able to cooperate on initiatives such as gas from Bangladesh, Burmese pipeline

through Bangladesh to India, power from Bhutan to Bangladesh, electricity from Nepal? What is the feasibility of the Iran pipeline?

--What are the implications of continued Congress leadership on regional politics? Is Sonia assuming a larger role in foreign policy? What are the implications of her increased interest in Indian foreign policy?

--How can we leverage India's initiatives for development and security in Afghanistan, including the Democracy Initiative?

--How to shift India's agnostic position toward Iran (terrorism, nuclear, pipeline)?

--Implications for India of the situation in Nepal and the Maoist Insurgency?

--Miscellaneous: Especially from the FSN point of view, are there any suggestions for improving USG approaches to particular problem areas? Has the USG missed the mark on anything in India or in India's relations with its region?

16. (U) Embassy New Delhi looks forward to fruitful discussions on September 29 with our colleagues from around the region.

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